

## **Media Bounty Email Copy**

Hi [First Name]

Understanding the ways in which your organisation can embrace sustainable and ethical marketing practices can be daunting. In a world of cancel culture, it's understandable that brands might be anxious about saying or doing the wrong thing when it comes to green initiatives for fear of greenwashing or virtue signalling.

But making marketing a force for change doesn't have to be a complicated or contentious process. It's all about making small, incremental adjustments to the ways we work that make a big change to the industry.

At Media Bounty, we're working to become the UK's most ethical independent creative and media agency by 2023 and believe that businesses and brands do not live in a vacuum but can make a massive contribution to society.

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Download our eBook to see the 5 steps we believe you and your team can take to start making a real impact on your people, planet, and profit.  
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Sustainability is a complex topic, and it's okay to not be an expert in this area. That's where an ethical creative and media agency like Media Bounty comes in.

We can help you find a way to communicate confidently on the subject and ensure your brand is contributing to protecting the world for future generations.

Get in touch today if you think you might need our help.

## **People, Planet and Profit**

If your business is built on ethical pillars that balance people, planet, and profit, it's important that your values are felt by your customers. But, according to [WFA research](#), there's a significant gap between marketing and sustainability that urgently needs to be closed.

The findings showed that 89% of marketers interviewed felt they needed to be braver in communicating their sustainability efforts, but only (in many cases) due to the fear of consumer backlash.

Making marketing a force for change doesn't have to be complicated. We look at the ways you can harness the opportunity to 'frame' sustainability in a tangible way, from how you sell your products and services, to the way you execute your campaign.

It's about making small, incremental changes to how we work that can result in a big change to our industry. Here are 5 steps we believe teams can take to start making a real impact.

### 1) Define What 'Excelling at Ethics' Means For Your Brand

There are several ways to adopt an ethical approach to marketing communications, and brands should first define what 'ethical' means to them. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and what is considered the pinnacle of ethics for one brand, won't necessarily be right for another.

Think about where your brand is on its ethical journey and the things you can change, introduce, or reduce. Don't try to run before you can walk, or you risk accusations of greenwashing or virtue signalling.

Start by identifying the low-hanging fruit, for example, ask your Media Agency to use the [IPA's Media Carbon Calculator](#) to calculate the carbon emissions associated with your media plan based on the media mix. Once you know your impact, you can look at how to offset it and aim to become net-zero.

A brand that has done this well is [Allbirds](#), a New Zealand-American company that sells footwear and apparel with a strong sustainability ethos. They accept that their brand pollutes the planet and as such invest in carbon offsets to fund projects that neutralise their footprint.

To date, they have worked on initiatives that have supported getting closer to regenerative agriculture, sponsored the acceleration of wind energy development, and supported the provision of efficient cookstoves for low-income families in China's Sichuan province.

There are several organisations that aim to assist teams to identify areas of improvement for sustainability and ethical practice. Working with the advertising industry; [AdGreen](#) provides tools, resources, and training for everyone to access to accelerate change. Their resources on how to hold a low carbon production shoot offer simple tips for how to improve sustainability that most brands can use as a starting point for their ethical improvement.

You might go one step further and get your teams to take the [Ad Net Zero Essentials Certificate](#), which provides best practice training in sustainability for advertising and marketing services professionals.

Investigate incremental changes in your day-to-day working practices. For example, can you digitise your PO process? Do you have promotional items that could be replaced for sustainable alternatives? Can you invest in ethical HR practices for your next hire by using blind CVs and gender decoding on job specs?

**Commented [1]:** Would be great if there was a client of Media Bounty who is currently doing this that we could reference instead of a third party. I did some investigation but couldn't find out if any of their key clients have carbon offset activities in place?

By identifying these areas of focus you can start to set boundaries around what “right” looks like for your organisation and implement a phased action plan that can be easily communicated both internally and externally.

## 2) Be aware of greenwashing

Greenwashing is when a brand implies it is environmentally conscious for marketing purposes but isn't making any notable sustainability efforts. Unfortunately, this has become all too common as consumers who prefer to buy goods and services from ethical and sustainable brands increase.

Greenwashing has become so prevalent that an [International Consumer Protection Enforcement Network \(ICPEN\) study](#) in 2021 found that 40% of global websites investigated, were using tactics that could be considered misleading when referencing their sustainability or environmental activities and credentials.

If you're tempted to exaggerate your brands' green activities, don't. Greenwashing harms the environment as it can divert people from changing their purchasing to a genuinely sustainable product or service. It can also significantly damage a brand's reputation so it's vital that promotion is done honestly. If you're making claims about your company's environmental or social impact, make sure you have the evidence to back it up.

**“Greenwashing is a form of misinformation that aims to maintain the status quo”**

Media Bounty Managing Director and Co-Founder Jake Dubbins

If you're serious about undertaking genuine green marketing, it's also important to consider the lifestyles that you're representing in your advertising. Are they representative of a net-zero future, or of a 'liveable and sustainable future for all? If you're working with an agency, ask them about their policies for net-zero and working with other clients. Would you be happy to work with an agency that is advertising your brand but also furthering the interests of fossil fuels?

There is a fine line between genuine green marketing and greenwashing and it's important that your brand doesn't inadvertently contribute to the latter in its promotional activities. We've compiled some simple tips to help you avoid greenwashing:

- **Walk the walk.** If you're claiming your brand is environmentally friendly, ensure that sustainability is a key part of your business model. Show your consumers that you practice what you preach.
- **Make sure your claims are simple and easy to understand.** Include specific units of measurement, certifications, and verifiable endorsements from credible organisations.
- **Use data to back up your claims.** Make your sustainability numbers visible to anyone who wants to find them. Only use data that can be verified and that is up to date.

- **Be honest.** Honesty and transparency are the cornerstones for consumer trust. Inform your audience of where you are on your sustainability journey and don't be afraid to say you know you aren't perfect but illustrate what you're doing to be better.

### 3) Trust and transparency will be rewarded

Brands that own their position on sustainability and can be open and honest about their activities will reap more rewards than those who pretend to be better than they are. No one expects you to be perfect, but you do need to be accountable.

Do not omit or hide important information. If you've done the work to operate more sustainably and you can prove it, make it a part of your marketing. Sharing the steps you have taken, whether big or small, reflects honesty and can inspire others to act to be better too.

Share a peek into your supply chain and practices on your blog, share an annual sustainability report, and post about your journey on social media. The [WFA Marketing and sustainability, closing the gaps report](#) shows that over 70% of millennials intend to make changes in their personal habits to reduce their environmental impact. And with almost half of this demographic and younger being on social media, there is no better place to illustrate your sustainable activities. Update the progress you're making toward short and long-term environmental goals, share interesting resources about topics relevant to your industry, and routinely post your green achievements and projects.

Support great climate content through your media. Fund creators, journalists, publishers who are telling the truth on net zero. Check your blocklists. Is the word 'climate' or related words there? If so, take them off. Make the effort and invest in conscious media planning rather than leaving it to machines.

Media Bounty prides itself on working with clients that do just this. Bodyform is a great example of a brand that owns its position and acknowledges that it has been part of the problem on environmental issues due to past packaging, its carbon footprint on absorbent products, and previous material sourcing but has worked (and is continuing to work) hard to change.

[Bodyform is clear in its commitment to sustainable practice](#) and clearly outlines its performance to date as well as providing information on its current activities, from reducing its carbon footprint for ultra-towels by 17% since 2008, investing in innovations to packaging and launching reusable products that have 68% less impact on the environment.

If you're worried that your brand or marketing might not be completely transparent, look at the [Competition & Markets Authority \(CMA\) Green Claims Code](#) to check that your environmental claims are genuinely green. Nothing builds loyalty better than a company that backs up its environmental claims.

Another clear indicator of a brand's transparency can be seen when investigating the people it does business with. If you're proclaiming to be a sustainable and ethical organisation, consider looking into your clients, partners, or members to understand what their plans are for achieving net-zero commitments, or their approach to similar initiatives to those you are undertaking.

If their response is not aligned to yours, seriously consider whether the relationship should be continued. Can you really be seen as trustworthy if you're saying you commit to becoming ecologically minded (as an example) but continue to work with a business whose carbon emissions are overly high, with no action plan to offset them?

#### **4) DE&I isn't just an internal practice**

Being ethically responsible isn't just about environmental issues, and it's important that your brand acknowledges the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) in all areas of its operations.

While many assume DE&I to be the remit of HR, marketing, media, brand, and communications all play a role in ensuring representation is seen and felt in how the business is expressed. From the choice of imagery to your media planning and buying, bias in messaging and language needs to be addressed.

Audience members want to see themselves in the content you produce and want to know that you see them. Marketing best practice encourages us to address the wants and needs of our audience, but do you consider the intersectionality of that audience, or are you creating for the masses?

With consumers becoming more attuned to diversity, providing content that shows more than one type of person, or voice is key to driving action. In a 2019 consumer survey [by Google and the Female Quotient](#), 64% of consumers took an action after seeing an ad that they considered to be diverse or inclusive.

By also insisting on having inclusion as part of your brand style guides and tone of voice materials, you can prime your marketing teams to avoid assumptions in copy, [use inclusive phrasing](#) and encourage proactive thinking.

By using your platform to show images and promote the voices of people who have been typically marginalised or under-represented, your brand is able to deepen its connections with customers and influence positive social change.

#### **5) Value Exchange**

According to a 2018 Nielsen Research paper "[Sustainable shoppers buy the change they wish to see in the world](#)", 80% of consumers expect companies to help improve the environment, and

over 88% of people would like brands to help them be more environmentally friendly and ethical.

So, think about ways that you can help consumers to buy and use more sustainably and use this in your marketing activity. An effective way of achieving this is by illustrating how much of a difference a purchase is making in concrete terms. By showing the direct impact that a purchase has on the environment, the consumer has an incentive to support your business and mission.

For example, Media Bounty Client [Kind Snacks](#) proudly proclaim that they are the first snack company to commit to exclusively sourcing 100% of their almonds from bee-friendly farms by 2025, meaning that a customer who buys a Kind bar over a competitor is assisting in the brands almond suppliers reserving up to 5% of their farmland for dedicated pollinator habitats to support bees, butterflies and other pollinators.

It's also important to think innovatively about how you can provide this value exchange. With the increase in brands establishing sustainable practices, there will always be someone further ahead than you, but think about how you can innovate in your own sphere.

Consider influencing the business at large to be philanthropic in its activities to charity partners who can help the environment and the people within it. At Media Bounty, we [support the World Land Trust](#) and donate to them for every project we take on.

And while we're not suggesting this is appropriate for everyone, there are small things you can do to illustrate to your consumers that by working with you, they are benefiting others.

## Summary

Marketing, media, and communications professionals have a large role to play in the ways that the brands they work for adopt ethical and sustainable practices.

If you act on the science and understand the steps you can take (no matter how big or small), you'll be able to exert influence. Ask yourself what part you will play in securing a liveable and sustainable future for yourself, your family, for your business, for all.

Sustainability is a complex topic and one which can leave brands anxious to discuss. But it's okay to not be an expert in this area. That's where an ethical creative and media agency like Media Bounty comes in.

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